

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-17, 19-23, 25-33, 35-38, 40-47, 49-56, and 58-61 are pending in the subject application. Claims 1, 3-7, 9-17, 19-23, 25-33, 35-38, 40-47, 49-56, and 58-60 have been allowed; however, claim 17, 23, 25-32, 38, 40-47, 49-56, and 58-60 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(a). Claim 61 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Claims 17, 23, 38, 40, 41, 47, 52-54, and 61 have been amended.

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the subject application. However, the Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the subject application based on the above amendments and the following remarks.

**37 CFR § 1.75(a) OBJECTIONS**

Claims 17, 23, 25-32, 38, 40-47, 49-56, and 58-60 have been objected to under 37 CFR § 1.75(a) for failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. The subject claims have been amended and the Applicants believe that the grounds for rejection are moot.

**35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS**

The Examiner has rejected claim 61 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,867,809 to Soga, et al. ("Soga" or the "Soga Reference") and also as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 6,349,268 to Ketonen, et al. ("Ketonen" or the "Ketonen Reference"). Claim 61 has been amended and Applicants believe that the grounds for rejection are moot.

The Soga reference purports to disclose a remaining life estimation system for electrical appliances. More specifically,

the present invention makes it possible to grasp the history of each of the components and joints such as solder constituting the printed circuit board 2 installed in an electric appliance under the used condition including the used environment.

Soga, col. 9, lines 22-26. However, Soga teaches a timer 22 that counts the operation time, i.e., the time when the power is turned ON. See, e.g., Id., col. 9, lines 32-38. By comparison, the present invention includes a timing circuit that detects an elapsed time from the date of manufacture and/or the date of first use. Thus it is the gross time and not simply the time when the electrical device is in operation, i.e., powered ON. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully assert that claim 61 as amended is not made obvious by the Soga reference.

The Ketonen reference discloses a method and system for estimating the life of a device so that components of the system can be replaced prior to failure. Ketonen predicts the life time of a device based upon measured temperatures and corresponding life time points and/or remaining life time based on a sensed temperature. See, e.g., Ketonen, col. 4, lines 1-11. Specifically, the Ketonen system periodically measures the temperature of a device and stores such measurements in memory from which a controller can determine the life time points corresponding to that temperature. See, e.g., Id., col. 4, lines 14-19. More specifically, the Ketonen system takes temperature measures at prescribed intervals, e.g., every two minutes, as measured from the time the device is powered ON. See, e.g., col. 5, lines 48-49. Thus, particularly with respect to claim 2 of the invention as claimed, the Ketonen system does not measure time from the date of manufacture or first use, but, rather, from each power ON event. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully assert that claim 61 as amended is not made obvious by the Ketonen reference.

In short, it is respectfully submitted that, claim 61 as amended is not made obvious by either of the cited references, and further, satisfies all of the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 100, et seq., especially § 103(a). Accordingly, claim 61 is allowable.

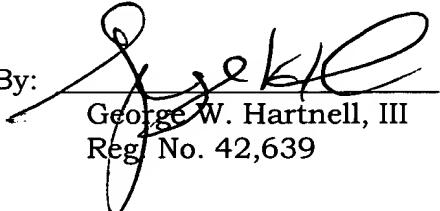
Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is requested.

The Applicants believe that no additional fee is required for consideration of the within Response. However, if for any reason the fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. **04-1105**.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: November 13, 2003

By:

  
George W. Hartnell, III  
Reg. No. 42,639

EDWARDS & ANGELL, LLP  
P.O. Box 9169  
Boston, MA 02209  
Tel.: (617) 517-5523  
Customer No. 21874  
347987